

Mont. : 15-12-1

Bettters House  
Martinsburg vicinity  
Private

c. 1890

This two story frame house contains two rooms down and two rooms with a centrally located stariway. This is the typical floor plan of small landowning families near the turn of the 19th century.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 16-12-1  
Magi #

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Bettters House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West side of Cemetery Road

CITY, TOWN

Martinsburg

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Emma Johnson

Telephone #: Not listed

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1 Bass Circle, S.E.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

D.C.

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 2836

Folio #: 434

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

M:16-12-1

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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This two story frame house stands on the west side of "Cemetery Road", a neglected dirt road leading from Martinsburg to the Pattuxent Rod and Gun Club and to the old cemetery of the Warren M.E. Church. The house has deteriorated; when built, it was a modest, substantial dwelling.

Unlike other two story frame houses of 19th century Black landowners in the Martinsburg community, this house consists of only one block and does not have the cross gable pediment. However, the plan of the main block is basically similar to that of other houses of landowners: two rooms down and two up with a central stairway. The facade consists of the typical three bays: a door centrally located leading into the stair hall and two windows on either side illuminating the two rooms. There are no windows on either gable end, like many landowners' houses of this type in Martinsburg and elsewhere in Maryland. There are small louvered openings in each gable end of the attic as ventilation.

The weatherboards which sheath the frame are now unpainted, but traces of white paint or whitewash can be see, indicating that the former appearance of the house was more colorful than today and the occupants more prosperous. The trims of the windows in the facade, however, are painted white and represent the occupant's modest efforts to give accent to the house. The and the general condition of the house inside and out, indicates that the occupant -- an elderly widow who lives alone, is impoverished, but trying to make do.

The kitchen, which is located in the northern gable end downstairs, contains a wood stove and a number of other significant artifacts used in years gone by. The kitchen was, therefore, photographed to record those things, their placement, and their use.

A short distance south of the house stands an old wooden trailer removed from a truck and converted into a dwelling. A door was cut near the center of the length and two small windows were cut on either side. The result is a facade with bilateral symmetry like that of the main house on the property. A stove pipe ascends through the roof just north of the center. Most likely there are two rooms inside, the one on the north being the kitchen and the one on the south being the bedroom.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
				Black history		

SPECIFIC DATES 1890s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is another example of the type built by Black landowners in Martinsburg and elsewhere in Maryland. In plan and construction it is similar to others in the community, though it is more modest in style. The occupant, Mrs. Ada Betters, has no running water and cooks over an old wood stove. The result is that her way of life is closer to that of families years ago, so she and the things she uses in her kitchen were photographed.

The sequence of Black land ownership of this tract is as follows:

Nathan Taylor (who is identified as "col'd" in the deed) purchased 81 acres from John Jones in 1866, L/F EBP 2/649. He paid \$11141 for the tract in cash; there was no mortgage. This was highly unusual for a black person to have that money at this time.

Isaac Betters, Sr. and wife purchased 13 acres of this larger tract from Nathan Naylor in 1869 for \$342, EBP 6/234. He paid half, and took out a mortgage for the remainder, which he repaid.

Jacob Betters and Isaac Betters, Jr. received three acres of the property (on which the current house stands) in a will from their father, L/F 192/160, 1902 (recorded 1907), (will probated 1890).

Betty Price (who has now acquired the property through transactions not registered) sold land to Emma Betters Johnson in 1969, L/F 2836/434.

The role of Nathan Naylor in the Martinsburg community ought to be researched further since he was a man of considerable wealth for the time.

According to Mrs. Betters, her husband said this house was built when he was quite young, which would have been in the 1890s.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Montgomery County Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville  
 Oral interviews, (not taped) with Ada Betters and Lemuel Graham,  
 Martinsburg, Md. May-July 1978.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

George W. McDaniel, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

June 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~  
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
 (301) 267-1438

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
 Box 87, Stronghold  
 Dickerson, Md. 20753  
 (301) 926-4510



M:16-12-1  
Bettens House  
Facade. East length

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL 790502-2 # 17





M. 16-12-1

Bitter House

Bear Length West

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg Md.

Photography by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL790502-2 # 35



Bettens House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL790502-2 # 18



Bettens House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79



Bettens House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photographs by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL 790502.2 # 24





Bettors House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79



Betters House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photographs by Anne Lewis

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Betters House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79



Bethers House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79





Betters House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79



Bettens House: Interior

M-16-12-1

Martinsburg, Md.

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL790502-2 # 28